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PREVENTION OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST AND THE PROTECTION OF MINORITIES

Written statement*/ submitted by Caucasians United for Reparations and Emancipation, a non-governmental organization on the Roster

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[25 June 2000]

*/ This written statement is issued, unedited, as received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

The lingering effects of plantation slavery have left my people and me in a deprived state. We are deprived of our original identity. We, the so-called African-Americans, have experienced the forcible removal of culture, religion and 'mother tongue'. The annihilation of our 'mother tongue' is the extermination of our identity.

To the extent that we have been deprived of our culture, our religion and our language, we do not have our human rights. We have been dispossessed of those human rights possessed by every minority and people and protected by the United Nations. While we are a People, and not a minority, in the United States we are placed within a minority status. We mimic the human rights of the majority; but in reality, we are in the position of a minority, as every scholar knows.

The United States of America has destroyed our human rights. It has covered us over with its own, fraudulently, by trick and by duress. We were buried and hidden, so very much so that United Nations in making its laws has left us out, it seems: it is not known immediately where we fit. To be left out of both the Declaration on the Rights of Minorities, and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, is to not have political recognition of our human rights. Thus, we feel we can not intelligently argue the issue of a violation of our human rights. While we are human, we have not been in possession of our human rights for the past 400 years. Our human rights were willfully destroyed, utterly. They were destroyed by the slave masters, under the auspices of the United States central and local governments, during our long sojourn as slaves in America.

We, the so-called African-Americans, were taken away from the culture of our origin. The slave ship took us away from our ancestral religious belief. Regarding our original language, there were not any provisions set in motion by the local and federal governments of America for us to cultivate and continue speaking our language. To the contrary, originally, provisions were set in motion to prevent us from speaking our language. We were intentionally separated from one another with total disregard, during slavery, such that we would not be able to speak our language. Ultimately, we lost the knowledge of it.

By forcibly stripping us of the use of our language and of the right to be educated in the same, the Government of the United States deracinated our collective identity, making our condition irreversible. Absent exposure to our original tongue at the earliest possible stages in life and in primary and secondary levels of schooling, how could and can we speak it with other members of our community and preserve our individual identity? The United States causes us to remain trapped within the Anglo-American culture regenerating its 'mother tongue', in reality, its identity.

When we are able to argue about a violation of our human rights, this is our complaint: we are human beings, but to this date and time we are denied the human right of speaking our 'mother tongue' in violation of Article 27 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which the United States of America has ratified.

The United States grants the right today for us to speak our language. Then speak it, one might say. How can we speak what the U.S. has denied us the use of? If our 'mother tongue' is taken away, aren't we denied the use of it? No! One may say, you are deprived of the use of it; there is a difference. Is not to be deprived of the use of our 'mother tongue' the same as being denied the use of it? No! Says the State, to be denied the use of it presupposes it is in your possession; while being deprived of its use presupposes it has been taken away. Well, since it has been taken away, we are both deprived and denied the use of it. The very act of taking our 'mother tongue' away was for the express purpose of denying us the use of it. In fact, the act is tantamount to a permanent ongoing denial.

Thus, this will be viewed as a gross and an excessive act of denial of the U.S. to permit the so-called African-Americas to speak their 'mother tongue' in community with other members of their group. While the act of the U.S. may be viewed as a violation of the Convention on the Non-Applicability of Statutory Limitations to War Crimes and Crimes Against Humanity, which the U.S. has not signed or ratified, the U.S. has made itself responsible for the rights of minorities, within its jurisdiction, to not be denied the use of their own language in community with other members of their group. We cannot speak ours. The U.S. grossly denies us the right, having deprived us, continually, of the very instrument. And in its place, the U.S. continually has forced its Anglo-Saxon 'mother tongue' upon us for the past 400 years. Absent our 'mother tongue', we are a non-people, living without a permanent identity.

We have brought our prayers to the Working Group on Minorities, as it has been entrusted with the task of promoting the rights of minorities. We wish to thank the Working Group on Minorities. We appreciate and applaud their efforts and join with them in the recommendation that a Regional Seminar for the Americas be held in order to examine the issues of African-Americans in the Americas.

In conclusion, we, so-called African-Americans, support the notion that "Race" is a constituent element of the definition of a minority. In the U.S. Blacks are mindful, daily, of a consciousness of "otherness", with respect to racial differences, as every scholar knows. And, unlike the Indigenous Peoples who were native to the territory, before colonization, and who formed many groups and spoke several languages, African-Americans were displaced from their common territory, and yet they invoke their similar characteristics in order to obtain their rights. As the so-called African-American "Racial" group is a group destroyed, it is axiomatic knowledge that we are a different racial group from the majority: we have neither racial dignity nor political bond.

The integration movement of the 1960s, whatever of high hope and of good intention, it did not make us equal with the majority, nor did it set us apart as a people or as a minority. We continued to mimic the human rights of the majority. At the same hour, during the1960s, there had long been developing in the U.S. not only a consciousness of "otherness", but also an awareness to bring that consciousness into reality. The Ethno-racial differences had then reached the glass ceiling, marked by violent rioting in major

cities: Watts, California; Newark, New Jersey; Rochester, New York; Cleveland, Ohio; Cincinnati, Ohio; Chicago, Illinois; Harlem, New York; Detroit, Michigan; Washington D.C.; and Atlanta, Georgia in the time period from 1965 through 1967.

U.S. federal agents cleared the way for a non-violent solution. The US Government and its media sought to redirect the rising Black consciousness, by promoting integration. Non-violent integration's chief advocate was the late and the memorable Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., who fell to his unfortunate death from an assassin's bullet in the year 1968, having commenced the civil rights movement December 1, 1955.